

Verb Phrases

Teaching

The simple predicate, or verb, may consist of two or more words. These words are called the **verb phrase**. A verb phrase is made up of a main verb and one or more helping verbs.

A **main verb** can stand by itself as the simple predicate of a sentence.

The human brain directs our bodies.

MAIN VERB (ACTION)

Our brain is very important.

MAIN VERB (LINKING)

Helping verbs help the main verb express action or show time.

The brain could be called the body's control center. (*could be* is the helping verb; *called* is the main verb)

Common Helping Verbs

Forms of be	is, am, are, was, were, be, been
Forms of do	do, does, did
Forms of have	has, have, had
Others	may, might, can, could, will, would, shall, should

Identifying Verb Phrases

Underline the verb phrase in each sentence. Include main verbs and helping verbs.

1. The human brain is receiving messages all the time.
2. Some messages are telling the brain about conditions in the body.
3. Our senses will send messages about the world around us.
4. The brain can process the messages very quickly.
5. It can guide the body's reactions in an instant.
6. Our brain could be compared to a library, a storage area of information.
7. Even our thoughts and emotions are coming from the brain.
8. No other animals' brains have developed as highly as human brains.
9. I can do many activities impossible for other animals.
10. What other animal can write a song or a poem?
11. Do you know the three main parts of the brain?
12. The cerebrum has been studied by many scientists.
13. Damage to the cerebellum might cause a problem with balance.
14. Certain body functions are controlled by the brain stem.
15. Special x-ray machines may teach us more about the brain.
16. Some brain diseases have been discovered with these machines.

**Lesson
4****Verb Phrases****More Practice****A. Identifying Main Verbs and Helping Verbs**

Underline the main verb once and the helping verb twice in each of the following sentences.

EXAMPLE Scientists are learning new information about the brain.

1. The human brain is studied by many kinds of scientists.
2. Some have been looking at the chemicals in the brain.
3. The wrong balance of chemicals could change our thoughts or actions.
4. Other scientists are learning about diseases of the brain.
5. They might study brain waves with special instruments.
6. Powerful machines can take detailed pictures of the brain.
7. Doctors may try new medicines for certain diseases.
8. Some researchers are studying processes of thought and memory.
9. Exactly how does the brain work?
10. We may know the answer to that question in the future.

B. Writing Verb Phrases

Add a helping verb to complete the verb phrase in each sentence below.

1. _____ you understand the thought patterns of animals?
2. Scientists _____ been doing studies on animal brains.
3. For a long time they _____ known that the brains of other animals are more simple than human ones.
4. They _____ know for sure that worms and insects have groups of nerve cells.
5. These animals _____ gather information from their senses.
6. They _____ react to things but cannot think.
7. The brains of sharks and other fish _____ remained rather simple over time.
8. These animals _____ listed far below squirrels in brain power.
9. The chimpanzee's brain _____ be classified as most like the human brain.
10. No one _____ discovered an organ as complex as the human brain.

Verb Phrases

Application

A. Writing Sentences Using Verb Phrases

Make a verb phrase by adding a helping verb to each main verb below. Then write a sentence using the verb phrase. Underline the verb phrase.

EXAMPLE collect

The brain can collect information rapidly.

1. think

2. feel

3. read

4. remember

5. react

6. sleep

B. Writing Using Verb Phrases

Use at least four of the following verb phrases in a story. Write the story on the lines below and underline the verb phrases that you have used. If you like, you can change the tense of the verbs in your paragraph.

is thinking

did stop

will discover

could be compared

should use

are working

can take

have been made
